

# THE FLOWER GARDEN

## Some Timely Jobs

### SOUTH MANCHESTER.

In the flower garden herbaceous borders and rose beds will be claiming most attention at present. To relieve the congestion in the borders, probably more pronounced this season because of the clearing of ground for the growing of foodstuffs, many of us will be tempted to do what at other times we should prefer not to do in the way of cutting down stems of delphiniums, lupins, and other tall earlier flowering plants at once instead of waiting for the return of the sap to invigorate the stocks. The quality of such plants will suffer, but, on the other hand, their later flowering companions will benefit by more light and air and more room for expansion. The opportunity should then be taken of completing the tying up of such plants as are likely to suffer from heavy winds, such as the phloxes, heleniums, rudbeckias, hollyhocks, Michaelmas daisies, golden rod, and the annual sunflowers—many more of which are being grown this year, rather for the feeding of poultry than for their decorative value. All of them will be benefited by occasional doses of liquid fertiliser and by the prompt removal of flower heads, as they begin to fade, in order to prevent their going to seed and ceasing to bloom. This precaution applies with at least equal force to beds or edgings of annuals and to all kinds of dahlias.

The border chrysanthemums, though rather behind-hand this year, are beginning to swell their buds, and as there will not be the usual inducements to produce "exhibition" blooms, less disbudding, with larger clusters and smaller individual flowers, will be the rule in most gardens. But with many varieties some disbudding is advisable, especially of those which are not usually at their best until late September and early October. If the two smaller side buds of each group of three be pinched out as soon as this can be done without endangering the other, it should bloom all the sooner as well as be improved in quality.

So far as I have seen, in this district at any rate, the chrysanthemum does not seem to have suffered as badly as

usual from the leaf-mining maggots, which in my own ground have devoted themselves mainly to the columbines, with lighter forays among the parsnips. But where the chrysanthemum species is at work it should be kept down by the nicotine spray, which will also be of use against the surface caterpillar and other depredators that may be at large at any time now. And as earwigs are almost as troublesome to the chrysanthemum as to the dahlia, the same trapping device of inverted flowerpots filled loosely with tissue paper should be poised on stakes among the foliage.

The chief tasks among the roses are the pruning of the rambler varieties as they finish flowering, the prompt removal of spent blooms, and the protective spraying of at least all varieties which have shown a liability to attack by mildews, black spot, rust, leaf scorch, and other fungal diseases. From the ramblers all the short shoots which have flowered should be cut back close to the stems from which they spring, and in removing spent blooms from others it is a good rule to cut well back either to the biggest bud or the point at which a new shoot has already started. Comparatively few amateur gardeners think of spraying until the fungi referred to have actually obtained a hold on the tree and are staring them in the face. But, as the National Rose Society has warned us for many years, "all the fungi causing diseases of roses, with the exception of the common mildew, have their mycelium buried in the tissues and consequently protected from any solution which could harm them without seriously damaging the host plant." Consequently "the principal object of spraying is to prevent the germination of the spores with their production of the germ tube which could attack the host." Perhaps the best all-round spray against such troubles is the well-known Bordeaux Mixture. Alternatives include liver of sulphur (1oz. in two gallons of water in which 3oz. of soft soap has been dissolved); and, for mildew, a simple Russian remedy consisting of half an ounce of bicarbonate of soda dissolved in five gallons of water.

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